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Fiftieth Session

18th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 4 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I call first on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Omar Jaén Suárez.

Mr. Jaén Suárez (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express my satisfaction and that of my delegation at the President's election to guide our deliberations. We have strong ties with Portugal, based on the many cultural values that we have historically shared on the fertile soil of the Ibero-American community. For this reason, it is a great pleasure for me to offer Don Diogo Freitas do Amaral our sincerest cooperation and to congratulate him in advance, by virtue of his well-known qualities, on his successful leadership of this memorable fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The delegation of Panama wishes to take this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our recognition of the skill, intelligence and dedication with which he is fulfilling his responsibilities at the head of our Organization.

This fiftieth anniversary has been a year rich in events. Under the leadership of the United Nations, there have been two major world gatherings — the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing — which have focused the attention of the world on matters that are highly complex and difficult because of their cultural, social and political implications.

It is gratifying to see that these meetings have fundamentally mobilized women, who are increasingly occupying their rightful role, and that the Conferences have contributed enormously to convert the quest for a solution to the problems of the family and of children into the responsibility of us all, and into a moral imperative that transcends the healthy differences between us. Panama values as a substantive result the hopeful consensus and the important guidelines agreed upon.

We reiterate the responsibility of Panama in the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as our readiness to attend the Summit at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, to contribute to the necessary review, just as we greatly value our participation in the Group of 77. In this context, we reiterate our deepest solidarity with the least developed countries, with which we are cooperating within our means.

My delegation is convinced of the need to bring this Organization up to the level of its new and growing responsibilities, and to adapt its functioning, its procedures and its structures to the new conditions that

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characterize contemporary international society. We are convinced that this is a feeling shared by all Member States, and we believe that existing differences will in due course be resolved.

Panama is following with great attention the discussions taking place in the Working Groups on the Security Council, on the financial situation, on the supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" and on the "Agenda for Development". In particular, and in accordance with decisions taken in the Rio Group, Panama believes that the increase in the membership of the Security Council should aim at correcting existing imbalances in the regional distribution of membership, as well as changing its procedures and working methods, so that the Council can function in a transparent way, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Charter. In this context, we support the admission of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the expanded Security Council.

We are convinced that the expectations of the international community for renewed action by the United Nations can be satisfied only if the financial crisis confronting the Organization is overcome in such a way as to allow it to respond to the mandates of Member States. We are particularly concerned at the consistent trend towards a reduction in funds for development and cooperation programmes, as well as proposals to reorient food programmes towards emergency assistance programmes.

We consider the review and indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be of extreme importance, together with the approval of provisions for its periodic review. As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which establishes the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and as a coastal State of the Pacific, Panama wishes to reiterate the Declaration of the Rio Group regarding the resumption of nuclear testing, because that practice has a negative impact on the delicate compromises that this subject involves, as well as the Group's readiness to continue to negotiate treaties for the total prohibition of such testing, as well as the production and use of chemical and biological weapons.

Likewise, we vehemently reject all forms of terrorism, wherever they exist, as well as expressions of racism and intolerance, which are incompatible with our status as members of the human race. Respect for human rights is and must be a fundamental part of the new universal ethics, which my country has accepted as an integral part of our value system and which my Government is completely fulfilling.

We are profoundly concerned at the overall situation of the African continent, whose peoples deserve the best of destinies. Nonetheless, we are extremely pleased to underscore the admirable example offered to us by the South Africans who, moving beyond racial or cultural motivations, in a long and heroic effort that has caused so much suffering, have put an end to the most odious form of discrimination — apartheid. The difficulties involved in meeting, living together and working as equals in an atmosphere of tolerance and cooperation cannot conceal the important contribution being made today by the leaders of that Republic under the inspiring leadership of President Mandela, to whom we wish to accord a special recognition for having constructed the democratic foundations of a multiracial and multicultural nation, fully incorporated into the international community.

In the Middle East, particularly in Palestine and in Israel, we are delighted to see the efforts of two Governments and their respective leaders and peoples who are struggling tirelessly to consolidate the peace agreements and to move forward in building lasting peaceful coexistence. Our country wishes to add its voice of encouragement to all the forces involved in this exemplary commitment, which contributes so much to the strength of the United Nations system and to international ethics. Panama, a defender of the rights of the Palestinian people and a sincere and constant friend of the Jewish people, as well as of the Arab peoples, believes it is appropriate for the international community to begin to adjust the direction of its own decisions in order to strengthen what is new, to lend greater force to that which unites us, in order to encourage those who desire peace.

Inspired by these events, the Member States of the United Nations should recognize the recent achievements that have been made and further encourage the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina to find the political will to arrive at firm, lasting agreements that will spare their own peoples the suffering and pain of being innocent victims of war, of racism and of intolerance. The United Nations peace-keeping forces must be respected and protected, because this is what their noble mission demands and because this has been the decision of the community of nations. The same message applies to other areas of the world that are

threatened by violence, or that are subject to breaches of the peace.

I believe it is appropriate to refer to the request made by a large number of States, including Panama, to include the item of the special situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan on the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Panama supports this request because it is interested in the unification of China. But since that eventuality is as yet unforeseeable as regards the "when" and "how", we are convinced that both parties should coexist and participate jointly in the international community with equality and mutual respect. Panama, as a coastal country of the Pacific, and completely sovereign in the inter-oceanic Canal whose neutrality opens it to peaceful use by all nations of the world, desires friendship with all States and wishes to normalize its relations with all users of this inter-oceanic passage.

The Torrijos-Carter Treaties provide for the culmination on 31 December 1999 of the process of the return to Panama of the inter-oceanic canal and adjacent facilities and the agreed withdrawal of the troops and military facilities of the United States. This exceptional diplomatic and political event constitutes an example of the peaceful and just settlement of disputes between a world Power and a small country, which today have excellent relations of friendship and cooperation based on trust and mutual respect, as is appropriate for two States committed to efforts to consolidate prosperity, peace, security and democracy on the continent.

The regime of neutrality of the Panama Canal, in establishing freedom of transit for ships, without discrimination, promotes the strengthening of an interdependent world with an increasing trend towards international cooperation. It also provides in our hemisphere a concrete example of a system of collective security which ensures the peaceful uses of that inter-oceanic canal, openly, on equal conditions, both in times of peace and in times of war, for ships of all flags and nations of the world. From this rostrum we reiterate the invitation to States Members of the United Nations to adhere to the Treaty concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal.

We are and shall remain the Western hemisphere's key to the immense Pacific. President Ernesto Pérez Balladares's recent successful tour of Asia, following his attendance at the Quito Summit of the Rio Group, and his acceptance of the invitation of the President of the United States to go to Washington reflect the desire to reaffirm clearly our decision to establish the closest political, diplomatic and commercial relations with all nations in the geographic arc from Japan to Australia, through the Philippines, and including all the other coastal States of the Asian continent. In keeping with this, we are interested in being admitted to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, as is appropriate for a country that is essentially maritime and commercial.

We therefore wish to continue to be the point of convergence, the meeting-point, of races, cultures and civilizations. We wish to continue to express our natural historical and geographical calling, which inspired the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama of 1826, initiated by Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, and which later made possible the emergence of the Organization of American States, the United Nations, the Contadora Final Act and the Rio Group — cornerstones of agreement, dialogue, peace and regional and universal democracy.

This explains that our openness to the Caribbean basin, in entering the Association of Caribbean States, our incorporation into the Central American Integration System and our admission to the Andean Group as a permanent observer are basic to our foreign policy, which involves intense activity to create bonds of integration and cooperation in the framework of fruitful, open regionalism. In this context, we believe it extremely important to express our encouragement for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General and his Group of Friends in the negotiations aimed at bringing peace at last to the noble people of Guatemala. We welcome the fact that Contadora is once again becoming a point of reference in the painstaking negotiation of national conciliation for that fraternal people. Panama is honoured to have hosted very recently the parties that reached the initial agreements to bring lasting peace to Guatemala.

We welcome the achievements of the European Union and its members, and recognize the value of its important contribution to international cooperation. We encourage it to complement this contribution by intensifying trade with our own country and our region through renewed readiness to facilitate access for our products to its markets. We are conscious that Panama is a bridge not only to the Pacific, but also to the Atlantic, which opens up new opportunities with the States of the European Union. We are following with optimism and attention developments in the countries in transition, with which we wish to have close relations and increased exchanges.

Panama, which is today a stable and secure democracy respectful of human rights, with a Government that represents with full legitimacy a people determined to shape for itself a great future of peace and well-being, wishes to remain the cross-roads of international trade, open to all parts of the world, where, in an era of globalization and market integration, the goods and services that are the principal wealth produced by nations can circulate.

Because of everything we are and everything we wish to remain, we are here today to share the opportunities that arise from a new situation, which, because it is not imposed by the manifest destiny of others, promises to open up paths towards a great future of cooperation and integration with the region and the world.

Panama is particularly proud to invite the members of the international community that use our inter-oceanic waterway to join us in September 1997 in our capital for the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, where all the direct and indirect beneficiaries of this marvel of the modern world can see the progress in the smooth transfer of the administration and control of the Panama waterway at the end of this century, and consider its modernization and enlargement so that in the twenty-first century it can continue to be the most efficient, most competitive and safest means of maritime transport for the exchange of merchandise and products vital to the economies of many countries of the world. Recognizing the importance of this matter, the General Assembly, at its third plenary meeting, held on 22 September 1995, made it agenda item 162 for the fiftieth session, under the title "Universal Congress on the Panama Canal".

We invite representatives to participate with us in the development of the infrastructure of transport and trans-isthmus communications to serve the continent and the world, with the creation — already under way — in our country, on the banks of the inter-oceanic Canal between the Pacific and the Caribbean, of a large port for the storage and handling of goods, which will complement the operation of the modernized Panama Canal. We also invite representatives to participate in the City of Learning project, a great international centre for the exchange of cultures and knowledge, being promoted by our country on the banks of the Canal.

We also wish to say that we have offered the American hemisphere our territory and all the infrastructure and installations necessary to establish a multilateral centre to combat drug-trafficking and related crimes. Panama raised this matter at the recent Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group, which endorsed the idea and has put it to the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, because we believe that we can succeed in this enormous struggle only if all countries coordinate their plans and actions. At the same time, we strongly support the holding of a second international conference against the use of and illicit trafficking in drugs in order to deal with a problem that has become universal in scope.

Panama, as a founding Member of this Organization and a signatory of the San Francisco Charter, has been with the United Nations for its 50 years, carrying on with it step by step, day by day, observing its magnificent achievements and its great difficulties, which for some are overwhelming. But this is not a time for fear or regrets; it is a time for new endeavours, a time to promote new forms, ways and means of international cooperation, with a view to generating, by cultivating the complementary development of our national individualities, the cultural, economic and human resources that can enable us to be free of poverty and backwardness and to open an ever-broadening road to understanding, tolerance, peace and prosperity as we enter the third millennium.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Fares Bouez.

Mr. Bouez (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In a few days the United Nations will be marking the first half-century of its existence. This historic occasion, which the world with its different races, ethnic groups, religions, and creeds will celebrate, will reach its peak here at United Nations Headquarters, where world leaders and Heads of State will meet.

This occasion, while it should reaffirm the need for the United Nations, and underline its importance and the importance of its principles, objectives, and activities, will, at the same time, pose certain questions about the current state of the Organization and where it stands today. Such questions must be viewed in the context of the principles that governed the establishment of the United Nations and the objectives it was meant to achieve. For it must be recalled that mankind wanted the United Nations to be an enterprise for peace, harmony, solidarity, dialogue, and *rapprochement* amongst peoples and cultures of the world.

Through this legitimate dream, mankind sought to build an edifice for rights, justice and peace. The United Nations was meant to be an arbiter, a forum where people could seek to defend their rights whenever they are denied, and to redress injustice whenever oppression prevails. By establishing the United Nations, humanity wanted to put an end to the era of war and to open the door to peace, national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and to protect peoples' freedom of choice.

In the era of the communications and transportation revolution, when political, economic, demographic, security and cultural barriers are lowered, people need the United Nations more than ever. They need a forum for constructive dialogue and an effective and permanent mechanism for consultation, cooperation, and coordination.

We are witnessing a scientific and technological revolution that intensifies the need for a greater synergy that would enable us to meet increasingly complicated demands and challenges, to bridge the widening gap between nations and, together, to do what no nation can do alone.

The world's demographic explosion has put the Earth's environment under constant pressure to cater to the increasing demands made upon it. Competition for the world's resources is on the rise, as is the imbalance between human needs and disposable resources. The accumulation of lethal and sophisticated nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons, and the concomitant increase in their destructive capabilities across continents, increase peoples' risk of annihilation. Their proliferation and possession by some States that lack even the absolute minimum of credibility and fail to provide any political guarantees regarding the decision to use such weapons, increases the world's need for guarantees and controls on armament.

The information revolution is contributing to the rapid dissemination of information about political, scientific, and economic achievements across boundaries. Unequal access to information by some societies is accentuating their isolation and causing them to be bound by their traditions, either because they want to protect their national identity, or because they are unable to assimilate such achievements. Extremist and fundamentalist tendencies express the fear haunting these societies against what are often perceived as threats to their national identity.

All these risks make it more important than ever before to reactivate United Nations machinery and to reinvigorate confidence in its justice and credibility, to free its decisions from hegemony, to redress its imbalances, and to apply the same standards in its approach and commitment. That is the path we should take if the United Nations is to remain a world authority and an alternative to heated confrontations.

So, where do we stand at present with regard to the moral authority and credibility of United Nations resolutions? How can we apply one standard across the board?

The world has witnessed and continues to witness a number of local and regional crises. Lebanon, which has suffered from the scourge of war, follows what is happening around the world with grave concern and interest.

Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina are two clear examples of our inability to act in the face of horrible atrocities. More than 20 years have passed and the Cypriot problem still awaits settlement, despite numerous relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council to unify the island and to protect its independence and territorial integrity. The question of the islands of the United Arab Emirates still awaits a solution that would ease tension in the region.

Four years ago the Madrid Conference was convened. We were optimistic about the invitation, the content, and the sponsorship. As the co-sponsors were super-Powers, and the Conference was to be convened on the basis of establishing a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace anchored in the principle of "land for peace", and on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 425 (1978) respectively, we accepted the invitation, assuming that those who accepted it were also in agreement with its content and that what remained to be done was to discuss the questions of mechanisms and schedules.

However, years have passed and months have gone by while some waited for the results of elections and for the arrival of the opportune moment at the domestic level. Time has passed while some awaited circumstances that, they bet, were bound to strengthen their positions, or conducted secret negotiations that they expected to weaken, isolate or single out some other side. The result has been that we are still discussing today the basic principles which were supposed to have been settled at the very beginning of the Conference.

The principle of land for peace still awaits the materialization of the concept of "land". The principle of withdrawal is still being obfuscated by the term "redeployment". We are told that resistance must cease, without any guarantee that withdrawal or liberation will ever take place. We are told that the boycott must end, but no guarantee is given that usurped rights will be restored. We are required to engage in multilateral negotiations on complementary subjects while the fundamental bilateralism remains frozen and while we know not whether there will be peace, or what the form and content of that peace will ever be.

We are required to shake hands and to celebrate before we know what exactly we are supposed to celebrate. We, the victims of aggression, are required to give security guarantees to the aggressor. Those who do not possess weapons are required to reassure those who possess one of the largest nuclear and chemical arsenals which the world could not make subject to the Non-Proliferation Treaty when the Treaty was extended.

The media hype that surrounded the recent signing of the second Protocol between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, which glorified the event and amplified its content, makes us wonder about the extent of the authority that will be exercised by the Palestinian people, the size of the territories that would be returned and, ultimately, to wonder about the fate of three quarters of the Palestinian people who were displaced from the land of Palestine. What about their right to return, their right to a nationality, to an identity? What about those whose status was never discussed either at Oslo or at Taba? We wonder: Could those tiny specks of land — in which an authority less than that of a municipality will be exercised — be called the Palestinian homeland? Doesn't the isolation of those tiny specks into so-called security islands mean additional prisons in which anger and rancour will fester?

Will the 400,000 Palestinians who are now in Lebanon and others who are elsewhere in the world ever enjoy their long-awaited right of return? How can we have faith in a country that boasts of its desire for peace and its intention to restore legitimate rights to people while it continues to violate those rights, to build settlements and to occupy and confiscate land? It cannot be credited unless it desists from such actions forthwith, particularly in southern Lebanon, where it has recently confiscated lands.

Could this bloated glorification by the media serve as an alternative to the restoring of legitimate rights? Could this anaesthetization of international public opinion, this illusion of a solution, actually put an end to the problem?

We in Lebanon are patiently and diligently continuing to rebuild our homeland after the destruction of a ravaging war. We are continuing to build our institutions and our security. Those who had emigrated are continuing to return to their homeland, and those who were displaced are continuing to return to their villages. Laws are being enacted so that Lebanon may regain its natural place in the Middle East on the economic, political and cultural levels.

Lebanon has suffered for far too long from the consequences and reverberations of the Middle East crises. Lebanon has paid its heavy dues. Once again it proves that it is capable of facing difficulties and rising up to challenges and that its unity formula is much stronger than was once believed, because it is the only definitive reality.

Lebanon will once again prove that certain nations have a history that is more extensive than their geography and a role that is much larger than their physical size. As long as Lebanon's sovereignty and independence continue to be compromised; as long as major parts of its land continue to be out of its control; as long as the Lebanese State continues to be unable to extend its full sovereignty over all its national territory by its own legitimate national forces; as long as Israel continues to occupy Lebanon's territories 17 years after the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 425 (1978) which demanded Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanon; as long as Lebanese citizens continue to languish in Israeli prisons and detention camps, ignored by the international community in clear violation of their human rights — as long as all this continues, the wounds will never heal and the bleeding will never stop.

So long as the occupation of more than one eighth of our national territory continues; so long as Israeli raids daily sow our land with cluster bombs, fission bombs, scatter bombs and booby traps for the killing of children; so long as such criminal acts continue to be perpetrated against a people that refuses to surrender; so long as our women continue to mourn the loss of their loved ones and so long as our children cry out, the cries of anguish will continue to haunt the world and the voices raised against injustice will grow louder than the roar of the guns that defend a senseless occupation.

The occupier has used all the means available to it, but has failed to contain this anger. Israel's logic of security zones inside Lebanese territories and security belts has failed also. The cost has by far outweighed the returns.

The Security Council's method in dealing with Lebanon's complaints does not represent the optimum means of performing the role of that important body. We have waited so long for the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Instead, the Council has refrained from condemning aggression, and if it happens to do so, it tends to equate the aggressor with the victim of the aggression. When it fails to condemn, it uses as a pretext the desire not to cause any distortion to the peace process.

The peace negotiations, however, do not absolve the Security Council from the obligation to perform its appointed role at any given moment, especially when an act of aggression is committed in the shadow of a peace process. Nor do they absolve the Council from its responsibility towards international peace. Discriminating in the application of United Nations resolutions for some and depriving others of the right to call for implementation; discriminating in the application of the stipulations of Chapter VII of the Charter on some trouble-makers while refraining from such application on others in a sort of cover-up for the practices of those protected others, will deprive the United Nations of credibility as an arbiter to whom the nations of the world have recourse in search of justice.

The days when the problems of people were confined to their own countries are over. The days when State boundaries were barriers that contained a country's crises are over as well. Regardless of how distant any country may be from a crisis area, it can none the less remain subject to repercussions of such crisis. Thus every country remains vulnerable to the political, economic, environmental, demographic and security problems of other countries.

The Middle East must not forever be a fiery volcano that threatens international peace and security. This way, the region will not see better days nor will time be forever on the side of those who seek peace.

We have to realize that peace must be equitable, not biased; just, not unjust; genuine, not ceremonial; balanced, not deficient. Peace must help the refugee to return rather than consecrate his displacement. Peace must satisfy those who rebel against injustice, not provoke their anger.

The new tendency to weigh the suitability of resolutions, to selectively enforce some and freeze some, to elaborate different interpretations to different resolutions, an enterprise that is engaged in, from time to time, in the wings of the Organization under the pretext of having to interpret resolutions with reference to the circumstances under which they were adopted, all this threatens credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

This then is the situation we face today, and it is against the backdrop of this situation that I congratulate the President on his election at this session and extend appreciation to his predecessor, to the Secretary-General and to the commanders, officers, and soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), whom I wholeheartedly thank for their valuable efforts under difficult circumstances.

May God guide us to peace and to acquitting ourselves in the eyes of the generations to come.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Tom Ikimi.

Chief Tom Ikimi (Nigeria): I am delighted to address the General Assembly in the year of its fiftieth anniversary. On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I convey warm congratulations to the President on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are confident that in carrying out his duties he will bring his wisdom, competence and diplomatic skills to bear on the work of the Assembly. We congratulate his friendly country, Portugal, and reaffirm the warmth of the bilateral relations between our two countries.

Let me also convey our sincere thanks to his distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the affairs of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the courageous manner in which he is responding to the challenges of his office.

The uniqueness of the current session is not lost on my delegation. It is not only a solemn occasion to reflect on the achievements and difficulties of our Organization during the past 50 years, but also a golden opportunity to chart a new way forward. We therefore hope that the work of this and future sessions of the General Assembly

will continue to be inspired by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The establishment of the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War marked a turning point in the history of international relations. As an intergovernmental Organization whose principal tasks include the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of international cooperation for development and the progressive development and codification of international law and respect for human rights, the United Nations best epitomizes the will of the peoples of the world to live together.

We in Africa attach great importance to this fiftieth anniversary, as in 1945 the vast majority of our countries were not independent and therefore could not participate in the processes leading to the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco. It is gratifying, however, that from being represented by only four countries on that occasion, Africa has since grown to be the largest regional group within the Organization. This is in accordance with the universalist aspirations of the United Nations.

The phenomenal growth in membership evokes happy memories of the transition of a large number of Member States, particularly from Africa and Asia, from colonial dependencies to nationhood. For many years the United Nations was the catalyst in this process. Our continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), from its inception in 1963, similarly embraced this objective as a primary preoccupation. It was my country's privilege to be associated at the regional and global levels with the struggle against apartheid and for freedom and self-determination on the continent.

The United Nations is perhaps best known for its endeavours in the maintenance of international peace and security. This remains a major preoccupation, as events since the end of the Cold War have demonstrated that civil conflicts and political instability in many countries, particularly in the developing world, have become endemic, with grave consequences for international peace and security. These conflicts, which have their origins in, among other things, new nationalisms, ethnic differences and religious bigotry, constitute a test of the international community's will to meet the new challenges and provide appropriate solutions.

On this occasion, therefore, it is the hope of the Nigerian delegation that the Assembly will make sustained efforts to take decisions that will significantly enhance the prospects of global peace and security. We expect that further thought will be given to redefining the role of the United Nations and its perspectives on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building as continuing imperatives in crisis management and conflict resolution.

Given that the maintenance of international peace and security is a shared responsibility, the United Nations should undertake to realign and strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements. This is not to underestimate the need for Member States to make serious efforts to prevent war and civil conflict through confidence-building measures and the formulation and implementation of appropriate domestic policies. In this regard, we cannot but reaffirm the continuing validity of the peaceful resolution of disputes through mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and respect for applicable international laws.

We deplore the growing arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, on which vast resources are now being wasted. The nuclear genie has left the bottle and cannot now be led back into it; the trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki persists and continues to haunt the international conscience. Let us therefore resolve that such a tragedy will never happen again. The time for disarmament under effective international control is now.

Although progress towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament has been slow, we would like to commend the United Nations for its role in this sphere. Nigeria regards the agreements banning biological and chemical weapons as landmark arrangements. We must remain committed to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

On its twenty-fifth anniversary, in May of this year, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely. Developments since then have seriously undermined the confidence we have all reposed in the Treaty and its regime, and have regrettably cast major doubt on the commitment of Member States, particularly the nuclear Member States, to disarmament. In our view, efforts to achieve this must remain fundamental and include the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear- test-ban treaty by 1996, the cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, and the granting of security assurances by the

nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States in a legally binding instrument.

In our continuing efforts to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for the development of the African continent, Nigeria is delighted to welcome the successful completion of the negotiations on the Treaty of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which was endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers in June 1995. By this action, African leaders have given concrete expression to their collective commitment to make the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is our expectation that during this session the international community will respect this initiative through the endorsement of the Treaty. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will ratify the protocols to be annexed to the Treaty.

The framers of the Charter of the United Nations did, in fact, recognize that peace and development go together. Among the high purposes of our Organization is the promise of economic and social achievement by all peoples. To this end, a good deal of effort has been made by the United Nations and its agencies to support the implementation of programmes of action initiated by developing countries at national, subregional and regional levels. We commend these agencies for their efforts in tackling the problems of social and economic development.

In discussing the general issue of development, we recognize the primacy of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development. It is in this connection that we have welcomed the contribution of the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Development. For us in Africa, development is a question of survival. We place a particular premium on it as we confront the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

While the unsatisfactory economic situation of Africa has been the subject of many international conferences, the resulting programmes of action have remained largely unimplemented. Such programmes include the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted in 1991. The failure to implement these programmes has been due primarily to the lack of will and acceptance of a concept of economic interdependence by our development partners. Yet, it remains important that development should be seen as an integral and indivisible whole, an objective to be pursued collectively in the global economy.

The economic crises confronting the developing countries are multifaceted. I would, however, like to stress the pre-eminent need for the international community to resolve the external-debt crisis, which is a key impediment to growth and development in our respective countries. Most African countries devote a large proportion of their foreign exchange earnings to debt-servicing. It has, therefore, been difficult for these countries to also pursue sustained economic development objectives. It is clear that Nigeria — as, indeed, most other countries of our continent — faces limited possibilities for the implementation of their economic reform programmes without urgent and adequate debt-relief measures.

We believe that development cooperation should engender genuine interdependence, mutual interest and benefits in the context of global partnership. In the expectation that the developed countries will support and indeed assist the developing countries in their development efforts, we call for fuller cooperation between the two sides. The initiative to hold the Asia-Africa Forum in Bandung, Indonesia, in December 1994, as a follow-up to the Tokyo International Conference for the Development of Africa, was bold and imaginative. The conclusions and recommendations of these initiatives, which are also critical, need to be faithfully implemented.

The integrated approach to development being pursued by the United Nations is right and deserves to be commended. In this regard, we welcome the outcome of the recently concluded World Summit for Social Development and Fourth World Conference on Women. These conferences have helped to promote women in development and to enhance their role in public affairs. We acknowledge the interdependence of societies as underscored by these conferences, and the fact that all cultures have a contribution to make at the crossroads of civilization and development.

While recognizing the achievements of the United Nations, it is fit and proper, at this point, to identify also those areas in which the Organization has not fully realized its objectives.

On peace and security, it should be acknowledged that the United Nations has a commendable record of success. Since its founding, it is significant that there has been no global war and that the end of the cold war has enhanced the prospects for cooperation and the lessening of tension. However, new conflicts have emerged which have defied solution by the United Nations. It is evident

that the challenges of peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building require new perspectives and commitments from Member States. Moreover, while seeking to provide solutions to these conflicts, the United Nations must accept that it has a limit to its capacity. It should, therefore, not micromanage the internal political arrangements of countries in conflict. It is equally important that the United Nations be seen to be transparent and even-handed in crisis management in all regions. Furthermore, the United Nations should do more to cultivate and cooperate with regional organizations and arrangements in conflict resolution.

On decolonization, the balance sheet of the United Nations performance is largely positive. However, the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of nation-building have created difficulties for new States. These difficulties have resulted in the inability of many of the new States of the developing world to conduct their domestic and external relations in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Charter. The experience of a number of these States indicates that powerful members of the international community continue to insist on their models as standards for universal behaviour and application. The political and economic lives of the new States are further circumscribed by international financial institutions dominated by the economically strong. These institutions, which are as old as our Organization, have yet to adapt to the new economic realities and needs of the new States they seek to serve.

With regard to development, the objectives of the Charter have remained largely unfulfilled in view of the growing economic disparities between a minority of developed countries and the vast majority of countries which are classified as developing. Regrettably, dialogue between the North and the South, which is vital to effectively address this imbalance, has reached a deadlock. This dialogue needs to be relaunched in order to achieve a just and equitable world order for sustainable development.

Since joining the United Nations 35 years ago, Nigeria has played its part in upholding the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. It has also pursued its objectives with dedication and commitment. From decolonization to peace-keeping, we have spared neither efforts nor resources in fulfilling our obligations under the Charter. Our record in peace-keeping speaks for itself.

Within the ambit of South-South cooperation, Nigeria has extended assistance to other developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In our subregion, we are in active partnership with the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to accelerate development through cooperation. It is our hope that ECOWAS will become an essential component for continental integration as envisaged under the Abuja Treaty on the African Economic Community.

To avoid any doubt, I wish to state that we in Africa have long accepted that the primary responsibility for the development of our continent rests squarely on our shoulders. But the reality of our experience is that we have had to fight on the two fronts of political and economic reforms at the same time. Few regions of the world have borne such excruciating burdens in their development process. This calls for understanding and encouragement rather than indifference and benign neglect. Consequently, in addition to regional integration efforts, we in Nigeria have undertaken bold economic and political reforms. On the economic front, the current Administration in Nigeria has deregulated the economy and created new incentives for domestic and foreign investments.

On the political plane, Nigeria has embarked on courageous reforms. In spite of unforeseen difficulties and the complexities of the Nigerian situation, we have continued to make steady progress in our determined efforts to establish a veritable and enduring democratic polity. Indeed, only three days ago my Head of State, General Sani Abacha, announced a comprehensive programme of transition to democratic rule and the final disengagement of the military from power. This programme was carefully drawn up taking into account the objective realities of our national situation to ensure not only an orderly transition, but also the institutionalization of durable democratic structures of governance at all levels.

While we recognize and appreciate the understandable concerns of our foreign friends and the international community at large, we hope that due support will be given to our endeavour in the full realization that a democratic Nigeria, the most populous black nation on Earth, is an asset to itself and has much to offer the international community.

In order that the United Nations might be better equipped to discharge its responsibility as a forum for harmonizing the actions of nations, it is essential that the ongoing process of revitalization and institutional reforms

be intensified. This is necessary if the United Nations is to assert its central role in the establishment of a new world order. It is also vital if the United Nations is to truly reflect the equity and geographical balance that are critical for its efficiency and authority.

Nigeria, therefore, reaffirms its support for the expansion of the Security Council both in its permanent and in its non-permanent membership and, in this connection, my delegation renews the offer made by our country to serve the international community as a permanent member in the expanded Security Council.

As we look to the future, it is obvious that the effectiveness of the United Nations will depend on the collective will and support of its entire membership. There are two levels of responsibility in ensuring a strong and vibrant United Nations. The first is what the United Nations itself must do; the second, and more important, is what we the Member States accept to do to enable the Organization to respond effectively to our collective quest for peace, freedom, justice and development. In pursuit of these objectives, Nigeria is determined to continue making its contributions.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Mr. Rashid Abdullah Al-Noaimi.

Mr. Al-Noaimi (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This demonstrates the esteem the international community holds for the President and his friendly country. We wish him every success and good fortune. We also wish to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Amara Essy, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, who presided over the last session with wisdom and competence.

I should like to seize this opportunity to express anew our confidence in the strenuous efforts made by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, to enhance the role of our Organization in today's world.

This session coincides with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations. This is an important political event in the history of this Organization, particularly in light of the rapid changes that have taken place in international relations. These changes have contributed, in varying degrees, to the achievement of some progress with regard to a number of issues that relate to disarmament, economic and social development, and to the containment of some regional conflicts.

In spite of this, our international community remains far from the desired world peace. New challenges have emerged and have entailed suffering, extermination, expulsion and famine to thousands of people. These, in turn, have affected international life as they have impacted on the economic, political and social situation in the world.

Such a situation, of course, does not measure up to the expectations the new regional and international changes gave rise to when they followed on the heels of each other. The hope of witnessing the emergence of a new world order that would favour development, peace, growth and justice has not yet taken a concrete shape that would affect the future of mankind. The emergence of such an order requires a wider framework of regional and international cooperation which would work in favour of finding peaceful solutions to world problems. Such solutions should aim at elaborating a comprehensive approach designed to promote and enhance human, economic and social development, encourage harmony, tolerance and communal solidarity, ensure respect for the customs, traditions and religious beliefs of each community and country, in addition to combating terrorism and its manifestations, combating drug trafficking, and strengthening the role of the United Nations in the areas of peace-keeping, conflict prevention and the mitigation of the human suffering of many peoples of the world, especially in the developing world. We believe that the establishment of such a world order requires a stronger political will and a much wider framework of regional and international cooperation in order for it to be compatible with the thrust of the new international changes.

The stability and security of States and the settlement of disputes have become high priorities of today's world. To achieve stability and security, new practices are needed. Such practices should be based on the provisions of international law and the principles of the Charter, especially the principles of sovereignty, regional peace, non-interference in internal affairs of States, the settlement of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means and the promotion of relations of good-neighbourliness.

On this basis, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its position which calls for direct bilateral and unconditional negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran to put an end to its military occupation, which has lasted since 1971, of the three Arab islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Moussa, as those islands form an indivisible part of the territorial sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates. If this is feasible, my country renews its initiative, announced at the last session, which calls for referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice, in view of the fact that the Court is the international body entrusted with the settlement of disputes and that many countries, including Iran, have had recourse to it in seeking to settle similar disputes.

Our peace initiatives have received support from sisterly countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and other friendly, peace-loving nations, since what is at stake here is one of our legal sovereign rights. In spite of this peaceful approach, the Islamic Republic of Iran not only rejects those initiatives but also imposes a policy of *fait accompli* by military force. It has adopted a set of illegal measures with the aim of entrenching its occupation. Those measures conflict, not only with the principles of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness, but also with the provisions of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

Over the past decade, the Arabian Gulf region witnessed a number of conflicts and wars that resulted in devastation and loss in terms of human, material and environmental resources. It would have been wiser to benefit from such resources by striving for economic and social integration and sustainable development in the interests of the region's peoples who enjoy common bands of history and religion and have common interests.

The question of building confidence between the countries of the region has become one of the most significant and focal issues for the Governments of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Over the past few years, those Governments have spared no effort in trying to ease the suffering caused to their peoples by past events whose consequences have demonstrated that the use or threat of force by certain parties will never lead to the achievements of their aim of changing the immutable historical and geographical realities of the region. On the contrary, the use or threat of force creates new crises and disputes that threaten international and regional peace and security. It is our belief that the best way of avoiding such a situation is to opt for dialogue, bilateral and multilateral negotiations, confidence-building measures and to comply with international legality.

In this context, we welcome all peaceful efforts and initiatives aimed at the demarcation of boundaries between the sisterly countries of the region. While we wish to put on record our firm position regarding the need to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, the need to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and not to interfere in its internal affairs, we call upon the Iraqi Government to meet all its international obligations set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, especially those relating to the release of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and the nationals of other countries, as well as the return of Kuwaiti property still in its possession.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the progress made in the negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, which led to the Declaration of Principles and complementary agreements, the latest being the agreement on the second phase of expanded self-rule in the West Bank. Implementation by the Israeli Government of those agreements would be an important and essential step towards enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and to the creation of its independent State on its national soil, like any other people in the world.

In the same context, we are of the view that the achievement of a just, comprehensive and permanent peace in the Middle East is contingent on making tangible progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. This will require a greater international effort, especially on the part of the two sponsors of the peace process, to encourage the Israeli Government to comply with its undertakings and obligations in the context of the principle of "land for peace" and of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), which stipulate complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Al-Quds, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a collective international responsibility that requires the existence of political will, a new approach and the adoption of transparency, instead of the application of double standards, if the declared intentions in the field of disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction are to be translated into concrete realities. In

this field, it behoves the international community to take firmer steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use in any region of the world.

Proceeding from the importance we attach to the achievement of common security, we announce that on 25 September 1995, the Government of the United Arab Emirates completed the legal procedures for acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This is in conformity with our position which calls for the creation of zones that are free from all weapons of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East. This is a goal that cannot be achieved so long as Israel continues to refuse to submit to the system of international monitoring and safeguards or to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a posture that weakens the credibility of the Treaty.

In spite of regional and international efforts to rescue Somalia from its plight, conflicts between the disputing factions continue. We therefore call on those factions to end the bloodshed, to renounce conflict and to work towards a settlement that would restore Somalia's national unity, security and stability.

After more than three years of crimes of murder, destruction and "ethnic cleansing" that have continued to be committed by the Serbian forces against the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new turning-point has emerged in the form of the recent peace negotiations that have led to a preliminary agreement on the fundamental principles for a comprehensive settlement based on the decisions of international legality.

The United Arab Emirates, which has continued to call upon the parties, since the outbreak of the conflict, especially on the Serbian side, to resort to peaceful dialogue instead of military force, today renews its support for all the efforts undertaken by the international community, especially the Contact Groups of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Union and the United States of America, to solve this crisis peacefully and to guarantee respect for the territorial sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, we stress the need, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to lift the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to prevent the repetition of the acts of aggression, massacre and "ethnic cleansing" that the Serbian forces have perpetrated against Bosnian civilians, particularly Muslims.

In spite of the positive situations which the changes in economic and social situations at the national, regional and international levels gave rise to over the past few years, the developing countries have continued to suffer from hunger, poverty and an aggravated debt burden, side by side with the decline in the prices of primary commodities, and the inequitable measures that the developed countries continue to apply as part of their economic and trade policies and that contribute to widening further the economic and social gap between them on the one hand and the developing countries on the other. In view of this situation, responsibility for the resumption of dialogue between the countries of the North and the South rests with the international community, in order for it to serve equally the interests of the developed and the developing countries alike.

In the midst of the celebrations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the United Arab Emirates supports the international call for evaluation, reform and development in the structures of the United Nations, especially with regard to increasing the membership of the Security Council and ensuring the transparency and equitable geographical representation needed if the Organization is to face up to the great challenges, whether at the level of consolidating international peace and security or at the level of promoting economic and social development.

We should like also to emphasize the need for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations with a view to creating a wider framework of coordination and consultation, and with the aim of reaching joint peaceful solutions to current conflicts based on international law, with a view to strengthening security and stability and promoting development.

In conclusion, we hope that these aspirations will help shape and strengthen the commitment of all States to the principles of the Charter and the provisions of international law and will form a framework for the renewed unification of the power and determination of this Organization, which over the last fifty years has remained a symbol of hope in the ability of humanity to free itself from the scourges of war, hunger and disease and to live in lasting peace and security.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of Monaco, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Louis Boisson.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all, and with particular gratitude, to extend to the President's predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, our warmest compliments for the care and discipline he displayed during his presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Our compliments also go to the other officers who worked with him.

Allow me also to extend the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Principality of Monaco to the new Bureau that has just been elected and say how pleased we are to see this fiftieth session of the General Assembly under the esteemed authority of Mr. Freitas do Amaral.

Mr. Tsaty-Boungou (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The country he represents, a country that is open to the world, tolerant, accessible, culturally rich and enriched by the cultures it has encountered throughout its history, deserved to be given this recognition. Our General Assembly decided to give it and we are deeply gratified. His personality and great political experience at the national and international levels, has recognized abilities and dynamism should all help to ensure the success of this important session.

Its importance is first of all symbolic. Since man invented calendars, anniversaries have been occasions for celebration and rejoicing, and, as many speakers have said before me, for taking stock.

Since its inception, our Organization has lived through highly complex political, economic, social and cultural events and phenomena which make any appraisal difficult. It position and role have grown constantly and gained in importance over the past fifty years. The expectations that people have for it and the hopes they place in it can be measured by the depth of the disappointment and bitterness that can be seen in cases of failure or difficulty.

Has the United Nations not always tried to respond to the constant and often conflicting appeals made to it? Its responses are inspired by the fundamental values that prevailed when the Charter was drafted in 1945. Let us not forget that our States, by joining the United Nations, recognized the universality of these values. We must remain true to them and provide assistance whenever they are endangered. Recent events, still fresh in all our minds, have reminded us that these values have not always been respected and that faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small, has not always been shared. And so, at this fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, these values must be recalled forcefully and with conviction at every opportunity so that these same values can be the inspiration for each of our resolutions, and every text we adopt.

Above and beyond the States that we represent and their legitimate political interests, it is individuals — often vulnerable and adversely affected by poverty or war — who must be the recipients of international cooperation. It is our duty to live up to their expectations.

When we look at the situation in this way, whether in terms of the Organization as a whole or in terms of certain of its organs, such as the Security Council, it becomes clear that there is a constant effort at adapting on the part of the international community, and a need — widely anticipated — to make our Organization more performance-oriented, more representative and closer to the concerns of its membership.

We have followed with interest the work of the various Working Groups set up to that end. We have participated, and we have made suggestions, *inter alia*, with regard to equitable representation within the Security Council and an increase in its membership.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the membership of the United Nations, and today it includes all, or almost all, nations of the Earth. And so it would seem quite normal that its decision-making bodies, including the Security Council, should reflect this new reality. As the famous French writer and philosopher Paul Valéry wisely said, we have reached the stage when the end of the world is beginning. For this reason, we must now redouble our efforts and heighten our vigilance so that our Organization may be able to respond to this universality, in a relevant manner and in all its diversity and richness.

Along with reforming its decision-making bodies, the United Nations must continue to improve its functioning and restructure its operations. Major efforts have been made. We would thank the Secretary-General for this, and we would also thank the members of the Secretariat.

Improving the functioning of this Organization must take account of the need to strengthen its multilingual

nature. Every staff member should know at least the two working languages of the Organization. Using just one language deprives the Organization of a rich resource. If we wish to really enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat, we should first of all concentrate seriously on improving the language abilities of staff members so that they have a truly international culture and dimension.

As can be seen from our history, the people of Monaco and the Government of our Principality, like all peace-loving peoples, follow very closely all initiatives to reduce armaments and transform the arms race — which has gone on too long — into a race towards disarmament. Let us hope that with the end of the cold war, this approach will be strengthened and that despite technical and financial problems, disarmament processes will not only continue but speed up.

We must more than ever ensure that respect for international treaties and agreements and for international law shall replace the balance of terror, and that the law thus serve justice.

It is in this spirit that we wholeheartedly welcome the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our Principality was in favour of this extension, and so once again we would thank the parties to the Treaty for this courageous decision, which was inspired by trust and hope. We welcome the initiative of the Powers that have already entered into a commitment — which had been expected for next fall — to ban, over the short term, all nuclear-weapon tests. This is a major advance.

Our Government also welcomes particularly the decisions taken at the meeting, currently under way in Vienna, aimed at establishing a moratorium on the production of anti-personnel land-mines. We trust that this example will be followed widely.

Since joining the United Nations, the Principality of Monaco has been co-sponsoring the resolution on assistance in mine clearance. By contributing financially to the voluntary fund created for that purpose, my country's highest authorities wished to become involved, in a concrete way, in the implementation of that resolution. The international community, quite rightly, was shocked by the death and mutilation caused by these mines, which afflict mainly civilian populations, and children in particular.

Our delegation would hope that significant progress could be made in strengthening security and cooperation in the region of the Mediterranean, in the spirit of resolution 49/81, which we co-sponsored and which was adopted on 15 December 1994. Our Principality hopes that we will always be involved in all the initiatives relating to the Mediterranean countries.

We are also ready to support all initiatives in favour of international cooperation relating to the peaceful uses of outer space and those intended to develop, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, education and information programmes in support of disarmament. Making young people aware of this issue is a fundamental guarantee for peace in the years to come.

While general and complete disarmament, no doubt still far off, may today seem utopian to some, nevertheless that goal must remain our ambition. For when weapons awaken, their might and their destructive power are limitless.

This year, conflicts have been particularly devastating. Wars of another age have become the wars of our age, attacking, brutally and without distinction, men, women, children and defenceless old people.

The Government of the Principality is thus resolutely in favour of strengthening preventive diplomacy on the part of the United Nations. We would thank the Secretary-General for the initiatives he has already taken to promote the settlement of many disputes and to avoid the eruption or continuation of conflicts. The "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'" is an irreplaceable source of ideas, suggestions and wise solutions.

It is no longer tolerable that the Blue Helmets be mistreated, humiliated, taken hostage and used as human shields with no means of defending themselves. Those men and women are no doubt ready to sacrifice their life, but not their dignity.

This is a particularly appropriate time to stress — because recently the Organization has been criticized very sharply — how much it has contributed to the successful solution of disputes, which have sometimes been very difficult ones, and how much courage has been needed to take certain decisions and to carry out certain operations successfully.

The hopes for peace coming out of the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina represent a significant recognition of the courage that has been demonstrated,

and they are an invitation to us to continue to persevere and to be optimistic. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization reminds us, in a very timely way, of this, mentioning the 24 operations currently under way in the areas of preventive diplomacy, the restoration and maintenance of peace, and the four major operations, which he describes as multifaceted.

Coordination within the Secretariat between the three Departments involved in peace-keeping operations responds to current needs and concerns, a fact we note with great satisfaction.

When diplomacy, at the end of its tether, cannot prevail and conflict erupts, then barbarism triumphs. No law of war, no humanitarian law, can control it. The most vulnerable human beings and those without weapons are not spared. The only way to help them is by humanitarian assistance.

In conditions that are always very difficult and sometimes dangerous, many humanitarian operations have been conducted in a most admirable way in the last few months. Men and women have lost their lives, and I pay tribute to their suffering and to their memory. I would pay tribute in particular to the "blue helmets", the soldiers of peace, and to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to UNICEF, as well as to the many non-governmental organizations, some well-known, some less well-known, that have all worked tirelessly, constantly and with determination to protect, feed and provide medical and health care to populations that are adrift, assaulted by ruthless armed conflict.

This year, the Principality of Monaco contributed a large percentage of its public efforts to financial contributions in the humanitarian and social fields. We will continue to do so, hoping that the action that is taken to this end can be completed as the conflicts themselves cease.

We would like to lend our support, and this is in the spirit of the suggestions made by the Chairman of the delegation of Monaco, His Serene Highness, Crown Prince Albert, to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, to the thinking now under way on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations.

The international Tribunals created on the initiative of the United Nations designed to prosecute those responsible for crimes against international humanitarian law in the territories of the former Yugoslavia and of Rwanda must be quickly established and enabled to function so as not to disappoint the hopes that have been placed in them.

The idea of an international criminal court also deserves consideration and support.

Humanitarian actions and respect for international humanitarian law are corollaries in a period of armed conflict to the struggle being waged by the United Nations to ensure general and universal respect for human rights.

Since the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, significant progress seems to be under way. With human and material resources that are far from sufficient to meet actual needs, the Centre for Human Rights, thanks to the commitment and the extensive experience of its staff, is successfully continuing its work.

The increase in the number and the quality of the consultants and the technical assistance provided plays a major role in ensuring that human rights are no longer just a concept, but become a reality. The presence in many countries of specialists working in varied areas, such as training, education, legislative reform and public information is one way of anchoring human rights and, thereby, the state of law in society on a day-to-day basis.

The dispatch of observers to certain troubled regions of the world today is also an excellent initiative. We hope that it will continue, because it strengthens the moral presence of the United Nations. The creation of the post of High Commissioner is also in keeping with this approach, and we would encourage his actions. International cooperation in favour of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which is one of the basic vocations of this Organization, is being strengthened thereby.

Rights that are applied to certain categories but which should remain universal — as the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing has just rightly recalled by describing women's rights as being inseparable from human rights — must be recognized and strengthened in their application.

The implementation of international Conventions relating to those rights is an essential element in this strengthening process. The committees set up pursuant to

those instruments are the focus of this process and of the arrangements made to implement it. They must be given the means to act and to react.

The Government of Monaco is particularly involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989, and that of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 21 December 1965, to which the Principality of Monaco has just become a party.

The human condition in the twenty-first century will depend to a large extent not only on respect for civil and political rights, but also on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

It is in terms of human rights that we have to look at development, a point made in the 1993 Vienna Declaration.

The recent World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen also adopted this approach. My Government noted with interest the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which has just ended in Beijing.

All of this leads us to think, as does the Secretary-General, that development must first of all be recognized as a primary task of our age.

The fundamental objective must be to improve the standards of living of people throughout the world, including the developed countries, where an increasingly large part of the population is excluded from the benefits of progress.

The satisfaction of basic needs and the elimination of poverty, hunger, sickness and ignorance must be goals that we constantly seek to attain, using all available means.

The Government of Monaco devotes a major part of its resources to social assistance, particularly for women and children, those who are most in need.

The celebration in 1996 of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty will be an excellent occasion for strengthening the implementation of these recommendations.

Recent work on the "Agenda for Development" has attracted close attention. For the Principality of Monaco, development must above all be sustainable and based on balanced economic exchange and trade, harmonious regional integration and careful protection of the environment.

The implementation of Agenda 21, the Conventions and resolutions adopted at Rio de Janeiro in support of the environment and development, is in our view a priority.

The General Assembly has decided that 1998 shall be the Year of the Oceans. The people of Monaco, like all peoples that love the sea, are eagerly awaiting this event.

Through our history, our traditions and our economy Monaco, like many other countries in the world, depends to a large extent on the sea and its resources, whether these be living, commercial, tourist or industrial.

Protecting this valuable element of the environment against all kinds of thoughtless pollution and over-exploitation is a major concern. Enough must be done at the regional and international levels to protect it. In the Mediterranean, the Principality of Monaco is doing what it can, along with its closest neighbours France and Italy, within the framework of international agreements with practical and specific goals.

The year 1998 must be an opportunity for us to become more aware and to launch new multidisciplinary and well-planned programmes so that the next century will not see an irreversible worsening of the state of the seas and oceans. In this connection, we are glad that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is willing to act as the secretariat for the world programme of action to protect the marine environment against land-based pollution. The Government of Monaco will be interested in this programme and any other action to eliminate organic pollution from the marine environment.

The Oceanographic Museum of Monaco is involved in the international initiative to protect coral reefs. We have organized an exhibition to make the public more aware of the need to protect coral, which is particularly sensitive to all forms of pollution and which, to develop, requires a healthy and protected environment. The UNEP programme on regional seas deserves encouragement.

I cannot conclude my statement without mentioning the very serious financial crisis that the Organization is going through. The measures taken by the Secretary-General are mere palliatives. If all Member States were

to live up to their commitments there would be no problem; there would be no need for working groups or committees of experts, which, after all, involve additional expenditure for the Organization.

In conclusion, I should like to repeat something that was said by a famous politician: the United Nations, like nations, shapes its own future; nothing good comes to it by chance; those that serve it are those that develop their inner strength.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão.

Mr. Simão (Mozambique): On behalf of my Government and on my own behalf I wish to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral upon his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. I am particularly gratified that, for the first time since the creation of the United Nations, a son of Portugal — a country with which Mozambique entertains special ties of friendship and cooperation — is presiding over our deliberations. Mr. Freitas do Amaral's election to this important office bears testimony to his personal qualifications as an enlightened scholar and statesman, a man who has served his country with distinction and has contributed in the dissemination and codification of international law. My delegation, therefore, has no doubt that he will lead our work to a successful outcome. I pledge him our full support and cooperation.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to put on record my delegation's appreciation of the manner in which Mr. Freitas do Amaral's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, presided over the deliberations of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. His performance during the last session of this very important gathering brought additional pride not only to his country but also to the African continent.

I wish to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his continued commitment to the ideals of international peace and security. The people and Government of Mozambique are indebted to him for his dedication to the cause of peace in my country. He was, indeed, a key contributor to the successful outcome of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

Fifty years have elapsed since the establishment of the United Nations. There could not be a better opportunity for a collective assessment of its achievements and of the difficulties and challenges faced in its daily operations, as well as of its future prospects on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The creation of the United Nations following the end of the Second World War represents, in our view, the most significant step forward in modern history, symbolizing a collective effort aimed at preventing the eruption of another global conflict and at making our world a much safer place. The shape of today's world is therefore a clear demonstration of the contribution of the United Nations in its 50 years of existence.

While it is true that we are still faced with numerous imperfections, uncertainties and challenges, one cannot deny the fact that significant achievements have been made by the Organization. Owing to the United Nations, it has been possible, to a great extent, to prevent global conflicts.

Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, virtually all peoples of the world are today free from colonial domination. From this body, guided by the principle of self-determination, liberation movements, through the Special Committee on decolonization, aroused awareness of their individual fate. Today, the majority of those countries are here assembled as independent nations, fully exercising their inalienable right to self-determination. This is why the quest for peace and sovereign equality among nations has turned peace-keeping and economic development into two fundamental challenges before the Organization. All this progress has been possible owing to respect for and commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Ever since its independence, my country has attached great importance to respect for and adherence to international law. Mozambique was only nine months old as an independent nation when, in early 1976, its new Government decided to abide by Security Council resolution 253 (1968) of 29 May 1968 regarding the imposition of sanctions against the minority regime in the then Southern Rhodesia.

Despite the very high price our people have paid for their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, we feel honoured today to have contributed, to the best of our ability, to the implementation of international obligations. These facts were duly

recognized in Security Council resolution 386 (1976) of 17 March 1976, which, *inter alia*, emphasized that the application of sanctions by my Government, in full compliance with the decision of the Security Council, constituted an important contribution to the realization of United Nations objectives in Southern Rhodesia, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. Indeed, four years later Zimbabwe attained its independence.

The same applies to the common struggle for the eradication of apartheid. Mozambique was one of the countries most adversely affected by apartheid and its destructive policies in southern Africa. As will be recalled, within a few years following its independence Mozambique gained international admiration for its significant achievements in raising statistical indicators in key areas of national development — in particular, health care and education. Our economy was among the most promising and vibrant in the southern African region.

The situation of impoverishment we are facing today is a direct consequence of the war which ravaged our country for so many years. Our present difficult situation is a direct consequence of the price we paid for our continued commitment to the struggle against apartheid. Both the war situation and the situation of impoverishment in my country were created and promoted by the old racist regimes of former Southern Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa.

The peace that has prevailed in Mozambique since the signing of the Rome Agreement three years ago and the visible improvements in our economic situation underline clearly that with positive support and encouragement by the international community Mozambicans can find appropriate solutions to their differences and problems.

As I speak on this subject, I am reminded of a statement made by President Chissano in response to the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Freme Ginwala, during a State visit made to that sister country in February this year. On that occasion, the Speaker had apologized in moving terms for the horrible crimes committed against the people of Mozambique by successive apartheid Governments in Pretoria in an attempt to discourage the Government of Mozambique from supporting the cause of freedom and peace in the southern African region. In his reply President Chissano stressed that in so far as he was concerned the people of South Africa had nothing to apologize for because Mozambicans were aware of the consequences of their determination to support the struggle for justice and peace, not only in South Africa but also in the whole region. The President emphasized that in reality all the peoples of the region were victims of the same disease, apartheid, the elimination of which called for sacrifices.

Today, we all rejoice at seeing a free, united and non-racial South Africa, poised to fulfil its domestic and international responsibilities in efforts for regional peace, stability and cooperation among southern African nations.

With the eradication of apartheid and with our country surrounded by friendly and peace-loving neighbours, peace and stability are now a reality in Mozambique. Southern Africa is now a region of flourishing democracy. Together, we are fulfilling our collective responsibilities for regional economic development.

Last January, at the end of the peace-keeping operation in Mozambique, I came to New York and spoke to the Security Council about the progress made since the holding of the first multiparty general elections in my country. I indicated then that peace was indeed a tangible reality in Mozambique. Today, I am once again honoured to reiterate, before this body, my Government's high commitment to national reconciliation, so as to ensure that the peace we have all worked for is there to stay, forever.

Indeed, the advent of peace in my country has paved the way for Mozambicans to pull together for the economic development of the country. Accordingly, the Government that emerged from last year's general elections has drawn up a Five-Year Programme, from 1995 to 1999, in which the maintenance and further strengthening of peace, stability and national unity and reduction of absolute poverty, with emphasis on education, health, rural development and job creation, are our main objectives. Our Programme also aims at ensuring the resettlement of returnees and displaced persons and promoting the social integration of demobilized soldiers.

In addition, we are addressing other pressing issues before us. To this end I should like to emphasize my Government's resolve to continue working towards a lasting pluralistic democracy in our country. Accordingly, we deem it essential to ensure the normal functioning of our Parliament, the Assembly of the Republic. We believe its normal functioning constitutes one of the key factors for the consolidation of democracy in our society.

Within this perspective, my Government has recently established an institution which will be dealing with electoral issues on a permanent basis. The creation and consolidation of a new institution which will supervise our future elections will serve, in our view, as an important confidence-building measure for society and all political parties, for it will ensure confidence in future elections. As a matter of fact, we are preparing to begin next year the holding of municipal elections, which will complement the process that was initiated by the general elections in 1994.

The upgrading of the technical capacity of the national police is another Government key priority. As will be recalled, ONUMOZ was unable meaningfully to address the issue relating to the collection of weapons and their subsequent destruction. Needless to emphasize, those weapons represent a great danger not only to our own stability but also to that of our neighbours.

In this context, and on the basis of existing agreements between Mozambique and South Africa, joint operations are currently taking place between police forces of the two countries. As a result, thousands of weapons and explosives have already been collected and destroyed. Moreover, my Government is working harder in order to ensure that our police force is better prepared and equipped to deal more efficiently with transboundary crimes, particularly drug-trafficking and money-laundering.

On the other hand, my Government considers it to be of the utmost importance that the upgrading of police technical capacity should go hand in hand with similar progress in the strengthening of the judicial system, in order to support the work of the police effectively by prosecuting violators of our domestic laws and regulations. All possible support for our national efforts in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Another area of paramount importance in efforts being undertaken by my Government is that of de-mining. In this regard I am happy to tell the Assembly that the National De-mining Commission has been established. We are currently engaged in final steps which will lead to the approval of our national de-mining policy and programme. Even before the formal approval of such a policy and programme, national de-mining efforts are already visible in the field throughout the country. With sufficient resources I believe we can make greater progress in getting rid of land-mines nationwide.

I wish at this juncture to thank all countries and institutions which have contributed to the de-mining programme in Mozambique, and I look forward to their continued support in the years ahead.

In this connection I should like to take this opportunity to voice my Government's full support for the initiatives under way to eliminate and ban these horrible weapons world wide.

In spite of all the difficulties, we see ourselves as a nation determined to build a better future for our people. Our economy has grown by over 6 per cent during the first six months of this year. On the other hand, negotiations have been concluded recently between the Government and trade unions in order to find a common platform for the hardships deriving from the implementation of the Economic Rehabilitation Programme that has been under way since 1987. In an attempt to address the increasing cost of living our people are enduring in this process we have agreed to raise the minimum wage.

This is why we launch a sincere appeal to our partners to abide by their commitments to a timely and unconditional disbursement of pledged funds within the framework of the Paris Consultative Group. Without fulfilment of those obligations, plans for a better future in our country may be in jeopardy, with all the concomitant negative consequences for the consolidation of the ongoing democratic process, particularly given the concerns over the growing drought threat to our region.

We, for our side, are committed to deepening further our economic and political reforms and to improving the system of tax collection, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs.

A lot has been said about the prospects of the United Nations. I agree that our future will depend on the manner in which we address the needed reforms of our Organization. As my predecessor, the now-Prime Minister Dr. Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi, emphasized last year in his address to the Assembly, Mozambique shares a genuine interest in seeing a more representative Security Council. As previous speakers have stressed, the legitimacy and efficiency of that body will greatly depend on its representativeness. Efforts must therefore be made to ensure that the needed expansion of the Security Council not take place merely to accommodate the interests of those who are already privileged by the Council's current composition at the expense of the majority of nations. A realistic and innovative approach is essential to ensure that, in keeping with current new

realities, the interests of developing countries are fully respected, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The reform exercise must also take into account the need for every nation to abide by its financial obligations. In that connection my Government, despite the well-known economic difficulties, has fully honoured its commitments regarding assessed contributions to the United Nations regular budget. We are now taking measures to ensure that all outstanding contributions to peace-keeping activities are settled as soon as possible. We cannot expect a well-functioning and dynamic United Nations unless we provide it with the needed funds. It is only through determined, concrete action that we can all demonstrate our individual seriousness and commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The end of the cold war has given rise to mixed feelings about our efforts to address regional conflicts.

In Angola, the signing of the Lusaka Protocol between the Government and UNITA, coupled with the subsequent progress made by the parties to the peace process, has paved the way for a renewed hope in that sister country. I believe that Angola is closer to reaching a political settlement that will ensure the attainment of a lasting peace and tranquillity. My delegation encourages the Secretary-General to continue his efforts towards the full deployment of a peace-keeping contingent within the framework of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

The attainment of a lasting peace and tranquillity in Angola will be the best contribution to the regional stability and economic development we have long sought in southern Africa within the framework of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). In this connection, I am happy to recall that our Heads of State and Government, meeting last August at Johannesburg, welcomed the admission of Mauritius as a new member of our organization. With peace, democracy and growing partnership among its members, SADC is gradually becoming a vibrant and viable market ready to cooperate with other regions in a variety of fields of mutual interest.

Our efforts within SADC go beyond mere economic integration. In addition to discussions on peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building mechanisms, we are also addressing concrete issues aimed at preventing possible conflicts between our nations. It is within this perspective that we view the ongoing discussion on such matters as the common utilization of international water courses, transboundary movements of people and goods, and crime prevention and control.

My delegation looks forward to a political settlement to the threatening situation in Burundi. It is our hope that the momentum created by the Secretary-General's recent visit to that country, as well as other important initiatives, will encourage the parties to work for reconciliation in the interest, not only of Burundi, but also of the Great Lakes region as a whole.

The need to stabilize the political situation in that country is strictly linked to the future prospects of the ongoing political stabilization in neighbouring Rwanda, where mankind has recently witnessed horrible crimes and the untold suffering of innocent civilians. No one would wish to see it repeated ever again.

Given what the Secretary-General in his annual report describes as the

> "combination of ethnic polarization in Burundi and Rwanda, massive circulation of arms, porous borders and transborder movements of refugees" *(A/50/1, para. 888)*,

political settlement in either country, coupled with the early return of refugees and displaced persons, is vital to avert a greater tragedy in the Great Lakes region. My Government therefore urges all the parties concerned to work towards this noble goal.

With regard to Liberia, my delegation welcomes the entry into force of the cease-fire on 26 August as a result of an earlier agreement by the Liberian factional leaders. Similarly, we view the swearing in of the State Council on 1 September 1995 as an important contribution to peace in that country. We believe that with tolerance and cooperation among the parties, elections in Liberia can take place within a year as the first step towards a lasting peace and tranquillity in that country.

The prospects for peace in Liberia open new hopes for the settlement of the conflict in neighbouring Sierra Leone. My delegation encourages the parties concerned to work together in the search for a negotiated settlement with a view to bringing about a lasting peace and tranquillity in that country.

In the Middle East, we welcomed last year, the implementation of the Peace Accords between Israel and the PLO, which resulted in autonomy for Gaza and

Jericho. Today, we note with satisfaction that further progress has been made in this peace process, culminating in the recent signing in Washington of new and promising agreements between the parties. This is, indeed, a step forward which we must encourage and support. My Government looks forward to similar progress in future negotiations on outstanding issues, including the Golan Heights, the status of Jerusalem, and other equally important issues for the final settlement of the deep-rooted conflict in the Middle East.

The situation in East Timor continues to be a matter of concern to my Government. In this context, my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's assessment of the progress made so far in the negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia with a view to finding a political settlement to the conflict in that country. It is our hope that the forthcoming ministerial meeting scheduled to take place in London in January 1996 will lead to meaningful results.

Dialogue, not war or use of force, is the best choice for solving conflicts. It is through dialogue that nations and peoples of the world can effectively promote the international peace and security for which we are all longing in the years ahead. Therefore, dialogue must be further encouraged and supported wherever it is sought, be it in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Somalia or elsewhere around the globe.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the quest for peace and economic development must be viewed within the context of the principles enunciated by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "An Agenda for Development: recommendations", where he rightly underlines that development, in its numerous dimensions,

> "should be recognized as the foremost and most far-reaching task of our time." *(A/49/665, para. 4)*

During the last few years the developing countries in general, and the least developed countries in particular, in spite of the existing hurdles, have made significant progress in their continued struggle to reverse economic and social stagnation. Within this framework, they have undertaken far-reaching political and socio-economic changes through the implementation of tough structural-adjustment programmes, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and good governance. In addition to renewed commitments to conflict resolution, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building mechanisms, the efforts undertaken by developing countries should be supported and encouraged by the international community if we are to succeed in our common endeavours for peace and development in our respective countries.

As indicated by the President of the General Assembly in his inaugural address, quoting Pope Paul VI,

> "Development is the new name for peace." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1st meeting, p. 9*)

All peoples and nations of the world must be committed to peace and development and pursue them with determination in the new international setting if we are to build a better and safer world for all. This is our challenge for the next century.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.